



Fraser Valley family exemplifies woodlot values



Herb, Cal and Lee Carter have been sustainably managing the land around their Fraser Valley property and on their woodlot for three generations.

By SARA GRADY

Chris Gruenwald has tremendous respect for Cal Carter. Known as a hands-on, versatile woodlotter, Cal has earned a reputation for integrity in his community, among colleagues, and with the government agencies that provide regulatory oversight on his woodlot.

“It’s just that he really cares about doing a good

job,” says Gruenwald, a Registered Professional Forester as well as Cal’s technical advisor on Woodlot #W0043.

Given the circumstances, that’s no small task. The woodlot is located in the Fraser Valley, one of the most intense urban interface regions in the province, and hence subject to high levels of public use and scrutiny.

Within the confines of the Carters’ 416 hectare parcel (400 ha Crown-owned, 16 ha private)

you’ll find First Nations territory, a federal prison camp, BC Hydro power lines, wildlife habitat, small lakes and streams that make up a community watershed, not to mention hikers, hunters and other recreational users, as well as some permanent residents on the shores of Echo Lake.

While honouring the needs and rights for this larger-than-average group of special interests, Cal must somehow find a way to exercise his right to draw value from the timber. He does so by carefully planning small, selective cutblocks – usually two or three hectares. He takes cues from the market to decide whether he’ll extract cedar, fir or hemlock from his block, and he takes cues from nature (and, of course, provincial guidelines) to decide which trees come down and which ones stay.

It’s his practice to target the trees in the poorest health, and avoid large patches of old growth. Interestingly, the towering old growth trees are worth very little as timber; their value is in their role as part of the ecosystem. And Cal manages accordingly, with the guidance of his professional forester.

For the past 28 years Cal has taken pains to not only follow woodlot license regulations to the letter, but also to honour his responsibilities to his neighbours and the community at large.

“This woodlot is a complex environment,” says Ministry Woodlot Forester John Stevenson. “Cal has to manage social expectations on top of the environmental imperatives. It’s challenging.”

But the Ministry is confident that he makes



Lee Carter and his dad Cal cut logs to length prior to trucking them to market from their woodlot in the Fraser Valley.

a concerted effort to meet, and often exceed, all the regulations, as well as the needs of the community.

This piece of land has been under the care of the Carter family since Cal's father, Herb, acquired the woodlot license in 1986. A third generation logger, Cal wears many hats on the woodlot, and is passionate about his profession. "Cal does it all," says Gruenwald. "You'll see him jumping from machine to machine while we're logging."

Originally the family ran the woodlot by themselves, but as environmental and harvesting

regulations evolved, they consulted RPFs to help them interpret, navigate and conform to the rules. It's an ongoing and fluid process, but Cal keeps an open mind and open ears, ready to adapt to changes in environmental, social or economic regulatory conditions.

Case in point, they're currently looking at a potentially sensitive cluster of trees around Echo Lake that some stakeholders consider a special habitat for bald eagles. Cal and Chris have been working closely with biologists, the Ministry and the environmental group who alerted them to the issue, working hard to ensure none of his

logging practices will negatively impact these abundant raptors.

"I'm always open to hearing people's concerns, and will always seek out the facts to be sure I'm following the rules," says Cal. He's been transparent with his community in the past, taking time to visit any neighbour who might be impacted by future harvesting activities on his woodlot. Over the years he's received endorsement letters from neighbours, and was honoured with the Ministry of Forest's Stewardship Award in 2001.

Despite the hurdles he faces on a daily basis, Cal is unwavering in his support of the woodlot program, and his passion for forestry.

"I love the woodlot program," says Cal. "There should be more woodlots. They're a great model for small-scale forestry that's good for the province, and for woodlotters. I go to sleep at night knowing I've done something good for the community."

With his 20-year-old son, Lee, taking on greater responsibilities on the woodlot, it looks like this particular section of our province's forests will continue to be cared for in good hands.

2015 CONFERENCE *Wine, Woodlots and Wanderings*

The Okanagan Shuswap and Boundary Woodlot Associations are co-hosting the joint conference for the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations and the Woodlot Product Development Council this year.



October 2-4, West Kelowna



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